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ABSTRACT

The paper examines difficulties in identifying and serving gifted minority students, especially Blacks. Approaches that have been tried and found unsuccessful (such as using preparatory programs to try to bring students' IQ scores to the acceptance level for program admission) are reviewed. Research is described on traits exhibited by gifted minority students, such as high nonverbal fluency and orginality and imagery-rich language. Examples of gifted minority students are cited to illustrate difficulties in identification. Difficulties inherent in testing minority students are analyzed, and ways of using traditional instruments as part of multiple criteria are suggested. (CL)

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Commission Papers: Increasing Minority Representation in Programs for the Gifted and Characteristics of the Home Environment of Potentially Gifted Minority Children

by

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Since the formal inception of programs for the education of gifted children in American schools, minorities - especially Blacks - have been minimally represented. Despite the signal efforts of researchers and writers such as Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, Dr. Martin E. Jenkins, and Dr. Horace Mann Bond, the recognition that Blacks are capable of the level of achievement generally required to participate in gifted programs has been infrequently acknowledged. Yet there is glaring evidence, as exemplified by the vast number of adult achievers that many gifted black children and youth do indeed exist.

What, then, are the problems? If there are, indeed, black children with gifted potential why are we not finding them? Why do they appear so difficult to find?

Three difficulties immediately come to mind. The first can be attributed to the longitudinal study by Lewis E. Terman that included less than 1 percent of Blacks in its sample. This study also contained strong negative assertions regarding the genetic inferiority of Blacks and certain other minorities.

The genetic inferiority theme has appeared over the years in various ways. So deeply imbedded is it that Clark (1983) observed that

> A major problem encountered in providing for gifted students among the disadvantaged (a frequently used euphemism for Blacks) is the attitude shared by teachers and parents alike, that giftedness could not exist in lower-class (another frequently used label for Blacks) populations (p. 333).

The final difficulty is that the findings regarding black giftedness as reported by researchers and writers such as DuBois, Jenkins and Bond has largely been ignored by writers and researchers. The purpose of this paper is to discuss ways of increasing minority representation in gifted programs by suggesting ways to eradicate these and other difficulties.

Approaches that Won't Work

Over the years various approaches have been suggested to solve the problem of minority representation in gifted programs. Examples of some of these suggestions and brief reasons why they won't work follow. Fuller discussions of these approaches will be included in later sections of this paper.

Using language or procedures that imply a lowering of the standards used to admit "other" potentially gifted students is not the answer. Though it is often reported that minority students, especially Blacks, score lower on standardized tests than their nonminority counterparts, an arbitrary adding of points to make up the deficit is not the answer. This approach would, at best, symbolize an artificial solution to complicated psychometric problems that may be caused by the inadequacies of tests.

"Other" shall be used to refer to those students admitted to gifted programs using traditional procedures (i.e., IQ scores, achievement test scores, and teacher recommendations) as infallible measures of gifted potential. In addition, the act of "lowering standards" creates more problems than it solves.

Adding a "talents" dimension to a state or a district's definition of who will be served only sidesteps issues and perpetuates the notion of minority inferiority. This approach not only implies that minority children are not gifted academically but it also demeans the efforts that should be made to identify children in areas other than those presumed to be measured by intelligence tests.

For example, the recent National Report on Identification (Richert, and McDonnel, 1982) concluded that

> ". . . 'gifted' was taken to apply only to the first category of general intellectual ability (in the 1971 U. S. Office of Education Report) and 'talented' erroneously to refer to the other, implicitly less able, 'second class' or not quite 'gifted students.'" (p. 115)

Using preparatory programs to try and bring minority students up to the IQ cut-off score set for admission to gifted programs is also not the answer. Besides the fact that these efforts usually don't work, they don't respond to the real problem of the inadequacy of the IQ as a single determiner of gifted potential. Efforts such as this also further indicate to minority students that "something is wrong with them."

Using language that suggests that minority children should be identified according to abilities valued and emphasized by "their culture" is an example of another approach that doesn't work. Gifted children are said to be those that have capabilities that far exceed the average. In addition, since it is expected that they are more likely to assume adult leadership roles, they must be prepared to participate in world affairs that transcend boundaries of ethnic group or race. Identifying minority children according to cultural values immediately serves to limit their potential to develop the broader skills of leadership required outside of any one cultural group.

These and other such approaches generally won't work because they represent temporary panaceas to parts of the problem. Any approach that is destined to work should be true to two fundamental premises undergirding programs for the gifted: (1) The efforts are aimed at locating those children who have the potential to excel at the upper end of an ability continuum and (2) Gifted children can be identified in all groups within our society.

Relevant Traits of Gifted Minority Children

A fairly standard practice in the screening and selection process for gifted programs is to ask teachers to nominate students whom they feel belong. Teachers are usually supplied with a list of characteristics in the form of a rating scale to aid them in the evaluation of potential candidates. Many lists have been developed, some based on research and some on observation. Terman's logitudinal study of gifted children is the genesis of many of the items on rating scales. Because minority children were not appreciably included in the devising of these rating scales, it can be said that they do not provide descriptors of giftedness among minority groups.

What, then, are the traits that distinguish the minority gifted child? In order to answer this question some researchers have identified areas of strengths among the disadvantaged. For example, by using an abbreviated version of the Stanford-Binet, Bruch (1971) identified the following areas of strengths of the disadvantaged: visual and auditory figural content (e.g., art and music); memory; convergent production in practical problem-solving situations; awareness of details in descriptions; fluency of ideas; spontaneous categorization and classification of spacial items; and awareness of natural relationships or systems.

Torrance (1969, p. 75) believed that there were certain creative strengths among the disadvantaged. He has identified a list of creative positives he feels are indicative of the talent among the disadvantaged. Included are traits such as: high nonverbal fluency and originality; high creative productivity in small groups; adept in visual art activities; highly creative in movement, dance, and other physical activities; highly motivated by games, music, sport, humor, and concrete objects; and language rich in imagery. In suggesting that these traits be sought, Torrance was responding to his delineation of the basic issues that should determine how we seek the disadvantaged gifted. These issues in the form of questions are:

> "Should we seek to identify and cultivate those kinds of talents that the dominant society values, or look for talents of the type that are highly valued in the particular subculture? Are there important kinds of talents commonly existent among disadvantaged subcultures?" (1969, p. 73)

In efforts to differentiate between lower and upper class gifted students, Frierson (1965) found that they differed in the quantity and quality of their reading, in their awareness of parental aspirations for college attendance, in their positive attitudes toward school, and in their preference for school sports. However, Frierson also found that lower class children, placed in a special program based on their giftedness by the second grade, differed markedly in achievement, attitudes, aspirations from other lower class gifted children by the time they reached the upper grades.

Sisk (1973) stated that the most serious deficiencies of the disadvantaged gifted are related to their cognitive functioning. For example, they lack the ability to observe and state sequences of

events, to perceive cause and effect relationships, and to categorize. She also feels that they possess deficiencies in language skills (e.g., limited vocabularies and nonstandard grammar), and reading.

Riessman's report on the culturally different child (1962) described their differences in learning style. He concluded that they were spatial - not temporal; physical - not aural; content centered - not form centered; inductive - not deductive.

The above findings are typical of the literature descriptions of the disadvantaged children. Clark (1983) concluded that it would be difficult to plan for characteristically gifted children when disadvantaged children are also in the program. She also concluded that such

> "deficits may result in classroom behavior we seldom associate with gifted students: negative attitudes toward school, toward teachers, and toward their own achievement; inability to focus on long-term goals; and the use of violence in resolving problems" (p. 335).

Such descriptions of the disadvantaged make the identification of the "disadvantaged gifted" very complex. Yet identify them we must!

As long as we view minority students as a monolithic subpopulation the problem of locating minority gifted children will continue to be complex. Frasier (1980) suggested that one way to simplify the problem is to classify the students in minority populations so that a more focused search can occur. As long as minority populations are considered as an homogenous group, inappropriate procedures will continue to be applied. She offered the following categories:

> Student A
>
> This culturally diverse gifted student comes from a middle class home where the parents are well educated and hold high educational aspirations for their children. Students of this type have attended good schools where they were superior academic performers. They are mature, well adjusted, and goal oriented. They also have confidence that they can accomplish their goals.
>
> Student B
>
> This student comes from a lower class but well organized home. Despite socioeconomic handicaps, the parents hold high aspirations for their children to achieve academically and occupationally. Parents are active encouragers and reinforcers of educational pursuits. Sacrifices are made in order that their children may have certain educational opportunities. Students of this type have high aspirations, and are usually confident that they can achieve their goals.

Student C

This student comes from a working class home. The parents express a desire for their children to obtain an education though they may lack the skills to assist them. Achievers from this type of environment are usually well cared for and have a positive self image. They are confident that they can achieve, although their aspirations may be somewhat narrow.

Student D

This student comes from the kind of lower class home typically described in research literature. The parents have little education; the father is usually absent; the mother usually works at a low level job; and there are often a large number of siblings.

There is a limited educational tradition in the home, and the day-to-day preoccupation with survival tends to divert attention away from planning for the future.

Implications

Culturally diverse gifted students like Student A should have very little difficulty fitting into traditional programs for the gifted. Their abilities and experiences will be very much like those of other high achievers who come from similar backgrounds, regardless of race or ethnic group.

The motivation to excel is a typical characteristic of Students B and C. The achievement of both is above average, with Student B possibly achieving at levels closer to Student A. Both of these students may face problems if teachers base expectations for their performance on assumptions they make about low socioeconomic environment. It is most important that they be given opportunities to demonstrate their true abilities to perform.

The attitude of Student C will be an important factor to consider when implementing gifted programs. The level of motivation exhibited by students of this type will depend upon the degree to which the educational environment is perceived to be responsive to their efforts to perform according to their capabilities.

Students of this type described as Student D present the greatest challenge. Greater efforts will have to be expended to provide new and broader experiences for them. Many opportunities will need to be provided through which their ability to achieve is encouraged and supported (pp. 59-60).

Another approach is to consider the findings of studies that have focused on minority groups to determine characteristics of achievers rather than continue to modify, adapt, or adopt traits of nonminority groups. There have been only a few studies of this type. Findings from only one are cited here.

In 1970 Glaser and Ross conducted a study concerned with successful persons from seriously disadvantaged backgrounds. From literary and survey analysis they identified fourteen traits that can be used to distinguish disadvantaged achievers from nonachievers. These traits are listed below:

IDENTITY: Having a strong sense of self, pride, and worth.

ALIENATION: Experiencing some degree of detachment from the confines of their immediate environment.

FREEDOM FROM CONDITIONING: Exhibiting a kind of freedom from routine brainwashing normally succumbed to by others (i.e., escape from those routines of thinking and acting that produce a sense of guilt, inferiority, limited perspective, absence of hope and the like).

PHYSICAL REMOVAL: Exhibiting the ability to break dependency ties with social norm pressures.

LUCK: Exhibiting the ability to benefit from occurrences which help them to find constructive outlets and relationships.

SUPPORTIVE, INSPIRING RELATIONSHIPS: Receiving assistance from special people who believe in them, guide them, and stand for a new set of standards.

IDENTIFICATION MODELS: Identifying with "folk heroes" and even ordinary people who symbolize identities other than disadvantaged.

QUESTIONING ORIENTATION: Asking at critical points in formative years, such as "Who am I?" or "Where am I going?"

AWARENESS OF ALTERNATIVE PATHS: Discovering that there are other routes than being a slave or hustler. Such goals as self-determination, money, creativity, or status become attractive to them. Actions such as hard work or studying become seen as steps that pay off.

NEW PERCEPTION OF SELF: Sees himself as someone not locked into one fixed negative or limited identity; envisions self as having potential for being a person different from what he is now.

EXISTENTIAL CRISIS: Dramatic encounter of clear-cut choices and new ways. Confronted a crisis head-on and resolved through a higher form of self and world affirmation.

RISK-TAKING CAPACITY: Being willing to endure the anxiety, suspense, disappointment and humiliation of experimenting with new behaviors.

CHANNELING OF RAGE: Learning to direct the rage over being disadvantaged into strategic actions effectively designed to fight one's way out of the ghetto; avoids burying one's anger beneath defenses of passivity and self-deprecation, or firing it out at the world impulsively in ways that provoke punishment.

REWARDS FOR CHANGE: Receive support and acceptance for new behavior and identity from key individuals, new peer groups, or internalized images.

Finally, Hirsch and Costello (1970) conducted an important study "to explore the spectrum of personality dimensions in a group of black innercity children, to relate the observed personality characteristics to academic performance in fifth grade, and to compare achievers and underachievers - boys and girls - in the black lower-class group." (p. 81). A significant departure from most studies was that Hirsch and Costello compared the children with their peers rather than with white middle-class agemates. Findings pertinent to locating potentially gifted minority students follow.

Language development. There was no difference in language development as evidenced by quality of speech and syntax among achievers and underachievers. However, among achieving boys especially, it was noted that "their speech was not nearly so outstanding as their ability to use language as a tool in problem-solving" (p. 82).

There was no special difference between achievers and underachievers in relationship to cognitive development as manifested in visual perception, auditory discrimination, awareness of time and space, and understanding of logical relationships. But achievers tended to be better organized in their approach to learning tasks.

Even though they were responsive to external rewards, achievers exhibited an internal locus of control. They derived great satisfaction from reaching internalized goals. Achieving girls were more motivated by external approval.

Not only did achievers of both sex have a solid definition of themselves, and evaluated themselves positively, but they also demonstrated a high degree of interpersonal skills. Achievers also gave evidence of intense relationships with caretaking figures (usually their parents). These significant others defined the children as "special" and they were likely to be more consistent and supportive. The achievers also viewed these significant others as being competent. It was interesting that achieving girls also identified with competent (usually professional) women outside of the family.

Achieving minority boys and girls demonstrated a greater capacity for individual initiative, for setting reasonable goals, and for following through to completion. They were more adequate in most areas of personality functioning and scored higher on a rating of overall mental health.

A most surprising finding related to their fear of failure. Whereas underachievers were immobilized by failure achievers were often stimulated to greater effort and subsequent success. This is contrary to the reported reaction to fear of failure among nonminority students.

Though the studies dealing with achievers among minority groups are limited, these exemplary studies at least suggest a more culture-

specific approach. The development of rating scale items based on literary and research findings such as these should allow us to make more accurate observations.

In the 1971 U.S.O.E. Report the problems of identifying the gifted from minorities and diverging cultures is described as being complicated by assumptions that talents cannot be found as abundantly in certain groups as in others - with the emphasis heavily in favor of the affluent. The report further suggested that these assumptions may have influenced meager search and identification among other groups. While an exact cause for these assumptions cannot be stated, a positive relationship between status and achievement expectations has often been reported.

Gifted children are often described as coming from high socioeconomic groups with well-educated parents who provide a stimulating and supportive home environment. Books and educational toys are abundantly available and trips to museums and other educational activities are frequent. Overall, the atmosphere in the home is said to be intellectually stimulating and supportive.

Children from homes that don't have these obvious advantages are usually felt to be less successful in school and are infrequently thought of as candidates for gifted programs. Minority children, especially Blacks, most often come from homes that don't have these advantages because their parents are most often involved in lower social and economic occupations. Comparatively, minority group parents tend also to be lower than nonminority groups in educational attainments.

The results are that "researchers and scholars attribute much of the underachievement of low-income black students to their 'characteristics'. . . these 'characteristics' are traced to the family background and to the general environment in which low-income blacks are reared." (Hood, 1973, 312.)

The low socioeconomic status of minority students has been heavily emphasized as a variable affecting their ability to achieve. Reissman's (1962) very popular book on The Culturally Deprived Child became a popular source of information on the low income child and has done much to crystallize attitudes regarding the learning capacity of these children. Teachers and other educators, thus, have been indoctrinated in thinking that low-income, or minority children have certain educational limits. It is no wonder that the assumption persists that there are no gifted children among minority populations. The following discussion presents some relevant research regarding the effects of the home environment on achievement especially as it relates to minorities. A reeducation of teachers and others regarding findings such as these would be invaluable in removing their focus from irrelevant social status factors that hinder the identification of minority gifted students. It should also retard the efforts to only look at "talent categories" as the only area where minority children with potential can be found.

The oft reached conclusion is that the lower socioeconomic status of minority children which results in disadvantaged environments obscures

the discovery of gifted children. But, have we considered the appropriate home variables to reach this conclusion of cause which would, thus, effect our ability to find gifted children among minority group children and youth? I think not.

As Frierson (1965) has pointed out: "the more widely accepted thesis, based upon research evidence, is that low status obscures ability and prevents the full development of much potential. Gallagher (1975) exemplified support of this thesis when he stated that

> The hard facts are that unfavorable environment and circumstances do not provide for the linguistic development necessary for success in a complex culture whose very nature is built around verbal and linguistic systems (p. 374).

Kellaghan (1977), however, pointed out what may be an important fallacy in this conclusion. He suggested that:

> ". . most studies . . . used social status variables (such as parental occupation or education) as measures of the home. However, we cannot expect such measures to throw much light on the processes that may be involved in interactions between behavioral and environmental facts."

Further, Gordon and Wilkerson (1966) also felt that too much emphasis on social status variables cause us to overlook that while adverse conditions of life do not facilitate academic achievement, there is no evidence that such conditions preclude academic success. Finally, an anecdotal observation reported by Poindexter (1973) in his autobiography suggests that social status variables do not provide the complete picture. He stated that:

> "Hereditary and cultural environmental factors of this family would prompt many a predictionist to forecast a dim future in academic performances and accomplishments for this family of children. According to the laws of averages they were right, but unexplained tenacity and motivations may and often do defy these types of predictions (p. 3)."

Kellaghan (1977) reported that a number of investigators have argued that there should be more attempts to describe the forces and factors in the home which surround and impinge on the child. A comprehensive national study (Plowden, 1967) exemplifies such an effort when it was concluded that "economic level and social class are much less important than aspects of parental attitude, attitude to education, and attitude to books and reading as determinants of the achievement and educational progress of primary school children" (p. 382). The Plowden Report also noted that "literate homes with good parental attitude toward school may be found in the slums as well as in the suburbs" (p. 382).

Kellaghan (1977) concluded from his study of the home environment "that when a measure of home processes rather than of social class is used, considerable variation is found to exist in the homes of a group of pupils that can be grossly defined as disadvantaged."

Kellaghan used six environmental process variables to assess the homes of his disadvantaged subjects: achievement press - parental aspirations for the education of the child; language model - quality of language usage of parents (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary); academic guidance - extent of general supervision and suggestions regarding school work; family activeness - variety, frequency, and educational value of the activities of the family; intellectuality of the home - variety and thought-provoking elements in toys and games available to the child; and work habits of the family - degree of structure and routine in home management.

Kellaghan's approach finds much support in studies that have attempted to describe the home environment of minority achievers. Analysis of these findings suggest ways in which the number of minority children recommended for participation in gifted programs can be increased. These studies also suggest information that should be presented in inservice and preservice training programs to teachers and other educational officials who must nominate minority children for gifted programs. It is through this process that we can change the attitude of educators regarding minority children and gifted programs.

Coleman (1969a. 1969b), in his studies of disadvantaged children who are successful in school, reported that "school success and dropout are not class phenomena but rather are contingent upon certain parental school-reinforcement behaviors" (1969a, p. 95). He described the home environment as follows:

> There exists in this home a feeling of mutual respect between the parent and the child . . . a positive atmosphere prevails . . . characterized by helpfulness, stimulation, reward and freedom together with parental concern and guidance for the child. Parental assistance is always available but is given only when required. Stimulation is present in the form of overt encouragement on the part of the parents for the child to do well in School, to read, to have hobbies and to make friends. Stimulation is also provided by way of conversations between the parents and the child. Parents of successful children reward their children for accomplishments and usually the reward is praise. The child is allowed a good deal of freedom in managing his own affairs, in his conversation with his parents and with regard to the points of view he chooses to defend and to maintain. The parents exhibit concern for their child by being interested and involved in his immediate life, by requiring that he meet certain obligations to them, such as keeping them informed of his whereabouts and of his out-of-school activities, and by insisting on a certain standard of behavior. Punishments . . . are not of a physical nature and do not change the prevailing positive atmosphere of the home or the feeling of mutual respect which has been generated between the child and his parents (1969b, pp. 302-303).

Shade (1978) suggested that "the real difference between achievers and non-achievers is not the occupation and income of the family, but the difference in the family perceptions of the world" (p. 82). Slaughter

(1959) found that families of achieving Black children maintained a quality of communication that tends to stimulate the child's problem solving ability, independence and productivity.

Providing conditions that facilitate the development of intellectual ability is more difficult for many minority parents because of their low socioeconomic status but it is not impossible. The search for gifted children among minority groups must transcend the barriers implied by what appears to be a poor and therefore, unsupportive, unstimulating and anti-intellectual environment.

Maker (1983) has perhaps best described the problems associated with tests and minority gifted students when she stated that

> "It is difficult . . . to justify including in the program a student whose scores on the tests being used for identification are lower than the scores of children who do not "make it" into the program. It also seems difficult for many individuals to justify the use of different tests to identify children from different groups, even though these tests have been shown to be more appropriate (p. 317)."

How, then, do we find gifted children among minority group populations when state and school districts use cut-off scores for gifted programs somewhere in the 130 range and when it has been well documented that minority group children, especially Blacks, score on the average 15 points below most groups. Attempts to answer this question have been offered by a few researchers. For example, Bruch (1971) has suggested the use of the Abbreviated Binet for Disadvantaged (ABDA). This involves a special scoring procedure of items on the Binet that she has determined represent strengths of the disadvantaged.

The System of Multiculture Assessment (SOMPA) by Mercer and Lewis (1978) has been suggested as a way to assess disadvantaged students by comparing their behavior to those in the social system to which they belong. Then there is the Baldwin Matrix (BIM) in which information from a variety of sources is weighted to arrive as an overall evaluation.

This has not been nor was it intended to be an exhaustive review of assessment procedures suggested to locate the gifted in minority groups. Rather, the attempt was to sample some of the measures that various researchers have developed. The remainder of this section shall be a discussion of promising procedures and instruments not heretofore considered.

Using traditional measures. From 1934 to 1950 Jenkins conducted a study to locate superior Negro children. His studies were, in a sense a replication of the Terman study. The methods that he used demonstrated that traditional measures can be used to locate superior Negroes. A brief review of his method follows:

> A systematic search for superior Negro children in grades 3 to 8 of seven public schools in Chicago was conducted by Witty and Jenkins. The method of selection was similar to that used by Terman. That is, classroom teachers nominated the following children: (1) the child thought most intelligent, (2) the child doing the best class work, and (3) children one or more half-years under age for their grades. The McCall Multi-Mental Scale was administered to all of the nominees, and the Stanford-Binet was given to every child with an IQ of 120 or more on the McCall Scale. The New Stanford Achievement Test, Form W, was given to the 26 gifted children. The mean Binet IQ was 148.9. The

> average pupil demonstrated subject matter mastery 1.4 grades above the norm for children of his/her chronological age. The highest subject quotients were in language usage (146.6) and in reading (143.8). The lowest was in arithmetic computation (126.5). Among the conclusions reached by this study were the following: (1) Gifted Negro children may be found with about equal frequency at every grade and age level in the elementary school; (2) the educational achievement of gifted Negro children was not consonant with expectations based upon mental tests; and (3) the children demonstrated greatest educational superiority in those highly "verbal" subjects which appear not to depend greatly on school experience (1934, pp. 586, 594-595).

Fitz-Gibbon (1975) reported on a procedure to identify the top 2 percent in ability among eighth graders in an inner city school. A combination of the California Test of Mental Maturity, The Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices, the California Achievement Test, and teacher nominations were used for screening. Selection was based on results form the Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrice and the WISC-R.

These two examples illustrate that through the appropriate use of multiple criteria, gifted minority children can be located using traditional measures.

Measurement of learning potential. "Potential" means possible as opposed to actual; capable of coming into being or action. As I use learning potential to refer to minority students, I mean those students who have the capability of performing at above-average levels if they are appropriately identified. The earlier this identification occurs the better.

There is ample research to document that

> ". . . left to the educational opportunities available at existing schools in lower class areas, data shows that the longer the children are in these schools, the further behind they become in achievement. Substandard performance is expected. Even if disadvantaged students begin school with relatively few problems, and their reading achievement is at grade level in the early grades, these students fall increasingly behind national reading norms. Although arithmetic achievement stays close to national norms, these scores also fall as the student moves through the school system. Intelligence tests scores go down in proportion to time spent in school" (Clark, 1983, p. 333).

It has been pointed out that preoccupation with the "adverse" social and economic conditions of minority children impedes the identification of minority children with above-average potential. Also it is interesting to note that Henderson & Lang (1971), Sullivan (1973), Rubovits & Maehr (1973) and Shade (1978) have all observed that Black achievers tend to induce negative reactions from their teachers. Black gifted achievers receive less attention, are least praised, and most critized in a classroom, even when compared to their nongifted Black counterparts. These reports may help to explain why

potentially gifted minority students are not nominated for participation in gifted programs.

There are methods that can be used to determine the potential for above-average performance among minority group students. One method involves the use of standardized test data. It is a two-step process. First, examine the questions students answered correctly because they should have been exposed to the material through the curriculum. Second, evaluate the questions students answer correctly that cannot be attributed to exposure through the school's curriculum. This examination will provide an assessment of the student's ability to exceed fact acquisition. It will also give information regarding the student's ability to reason.

The California Environmentally Based Screen (Stallings, 1972) has developed an environmentally based screen that uses information from the child's immediate environment to test his/her abilities to reason, to remember, and to create. It involves the use of stimuli from the student's familiar environment. In the paraphrased words of Plato, "those who are not deceived have a vein of gold." It is that vein that can be tapped using environmental stimuli.

By using certain sections of the K-ABC, a promising new assessment tool, we can begin to assess fluid intelligence. Particularly promising are the mental processing composite, the simultaneous processing scale and the sequential processing scale.

Instruments like the Test of Logical Thinking (TOLT) are also useful to determine capacity to perform. The following logical thinking skills are measured by the TOLT: combinatorial, propositional, proportional, controlling variables and correlational.

Achieving minority boys and girls demonstrated a greater capacity for individual intiative, for setting reasonable goals, and for following through to completion. They were more adequate in most areas of personality functioning and scored higher on a rating of overall mental health.

A most surprising finding related to their fear of failure. Whereas underachievers were immobilized by failure, achievers were often stimulated to greater effort and subsequent success. This is contrary to the reported reaction to fear of failure among nonminority students.

Though the studies dealing with achievers among minority groups are limited, these exemplary studies at least suggest a more culture-specific approach. The development of rating scale items based on literary and research findings such as these should allow us to make more accurate observations.

A NONBIASED ASSESSMENT PROFILE[1]

Thus far, this discussion has pointed to approaches that won't work, described relevant traits of minority children that could enhance our ability to identify those with gifted potential, delineated characteristics of environments that support intellectual aspirations and given examples of assessment instruments and procedures that could be used with minority children. A large task, however, remains--how do you integrate this diverse information into the traditional process (i.e., intelligence test score, achievement test scores and teacher recommendation) used to certify children for participation in programs for the gifted? It is my contention that the integration of this new data is not the answer. Rather, the answer is to develop a profile that can truly demonstrate our use of multiple criteria in making placement decisions.

Frasier (1983) has presented a nonbiased assessment profile that allows for the interpretation of data from multiple sources. Data from learning potential measures, cognitive measures, creative measures, psychosocial measures, and measures of motivation are displayed on a profile chart. The data collecting instruments are quantitative and nonquantitative. A scale at the top allows for appropriate interpretations according to the evaluation method used.

The profile provides a collective picture of all relevant data on a student. Instead of making a linear decision as has been done in the past, a decision can now be considered on the basis of multiple data. The profile is so designed that screening as well as identification decisions are made on the basis of multiple criteria.

The profile has the added advantage of providing ways to make more accurate conclusions regarding instructional and counseling needs. By superimposing the initial identification profile over another profile developed at formative and summative points, student progress and program success can also be measured.

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